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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"—MATT. vi. 30.

Different periods develop a necessity of explaining, defending, and urging different truths. In our day there is no other one hitherto generally received truth that is so much assailed and so likely to slip from under our firm trust as the doctrine of God's particular providence. The steady advance of science, in the knowledge of material things and of the laws that govern them, up to a certain point will loosen men's confidence in that great truth. It has done it. It is doing it. It will continue to do it. But beyond a certain point science itself will come back to that truth, and bring new illumination, new faith, and multiply blessings.

It is not worth while, therefore, for Christian people hastily to cast away their confidence in this particular respect. No man, I think, will doubt me when I say that this great truth bears such a relation to the teaching of Christ that, if you take it away, you pull the string out from the necklace, and the pearls all scatter; that you destroy the cohesive element in his teaching, dissolve, disintegrate it; that the process by which you can rid yourself of so explicit and repeated a statement of truth as that of divine providence, even in particulars and minute things,

is a process by which you can cast out anything; and that the rejection of it substantially involves your faith in revelation, and in the inspired Scripture itself.

Why should one want to be rid of it? I can conceive reasons why men should undertake to rid themselves of the doctrine of responsibility; I can understand how men should wish to rid themselves of the restraints that are imposed upon their appetites; I can understand how men should attempt to sheathe those fears that are shaking them from the Word of God. They are painful in the time that is, and they threaten pain in the time that is to come. That men should seek in various ways to mask them, to disguise them, or to smother them, is not strange. But why men should seek to disabuse themselves of faith in one of the most benign of doctrines, and why a world that is full of the sunshine of God's thought and love should be changed into a world without a God that cares for it, I cannot understand. Why a process of time which is developing the future under the auspices of watch-care, thought, pity, and tenderness should be thrown overboard, I cannot understand. Why you should remit the world and its population to fate, or to a doctrine of natural law, which, when it is carried to its ultimate form, is as poor as a bone would be without flesh—hard and cold—this I cannot understand. I can understand very well how men might try to kick winter out of Lapland; but how, when summer comes to the Laplander, he should attempt to kick it out, I never could understand. And why men should attempt to destroy the faith in an overruling Mind, in love maintaining providence and so supplementing everything, and substituting for it a belief in fatalism, I cannot understand. It is so needful for a race to find its way up from animalhood to manhood, that there should be something more than its limitations of human faculty acting amidst gigantic influences of material law, and acting, also, under the swell of human society, through long periods. Those limitations, under the circumstances, are such that men would naturally, one would suppose, cry out for a pilot or a guide.

This doctrine of providence is the doctrine of the inspec-

tion of God. Known unto God are his and ours from the beginning. That his eye should mark the path of nations, and that, in their slow march from day to day, he should watch the individual elements in national life, is an infinitely pleasant thought. The destruction of the faith of men in the special providence of God largely withdraws the very means which they have of finding God out. That is, by pronouncing events which we know and conceive of as divine visitations to be simply natural forces, we substantially drive the thought of God out of phenomenal creation, and call effects the result of unconscious nature.

Now, the way in which men learn the reality of the divine Being is by an association of the thought of divinity with the physical globe, and with themselves in connection with it; and if you remit this view to the fatalism of simple materiality, to all intents and purposes you teach men atheism. That will be the ultimate, if not the immediate, effect. The consciousness of God with us, hearing us, sympathizing with us, giving us warmth, and hope, and comfort—I cannot understand how men should be ready to give this up, and especially the unfortunate, the weak, the downtrodden, who constitute the great bulk of the human race. I can understand how men, who, under the influence in their fathers of such faiths as this, have been developed into civilization, and carried up to strength and wealth in society or among themselves, should at last begin to feel that there was no need of that doctrine; but how the great underlying mass of mankind, who are living in twilight, can get along without any faith of an overruling God who takes part in human affairs, inspiring, controlling, arranging, adjusting, and making things very different from what they would be if it were not for him, I cannot understand. Nor can I understand how one should look on the wants of men and desire to destroy such a faith as this.

Since, then, it is not a thing which it is desirable to get rid of; since it does not present itself as an evil; since it come to us benignly, as a great blessing and benefit to the world, is there any good reason for depriving men of the comfort of this hope of a special and particular divine provi-

dence, from which they may derive the feeling that they are provided for?

The only objection that I have ever known to be urged against the doctrine of such a providence is this: that the facts are against it.

Well, *are* they against it? Have there been such discoveries made in regard to natural law that men can say that science and revelation are fairly pitted against each other on the doctrine of a particular, personal, divine providence in the affairs of men?

Science declares that this world is governed by great laws, whose action is definite, constant, and unchangeable; and that to teach that these laws are intermitted, overridden, or in any way interrupted, so that effects are produced without the operation of regular causes, is to destroy the constancy of nature and to contradict facts and observations. This is substantially the ground on which scientific men dispute the doctrine of an overruling providence—the ground, namely, that it interferes and changes results from what they would be; in other words, that the constancy of causation in natural law repudiates and rejects the idea of divine interference. I think I state the principle fairly.

Now, let us suppose that suddenly this world is emptied of all its intelligent living creatures, so that not a philosopher is left; so that not a civilized citizen is left; so that all the hordes of Asia suddenly slumber, and mingle, like the leaves, with the dust; and so that in all Africa there is not a savage, in all Europe there is not a Christian, and in all America there is not a single living, thinking soul: while lions are left, and elephants are left, and tigers are left, and all things are left except intelligence and the will that is coupled with it. What would become of this world if such a state of things were to exist? If the earth were emptied of its human population, how long would it be before that which is the glory of the globe—namely, the artificial or developed forms of nature and of society—would follow in this retrograde movement, and perish from under the sun? How long would it be before the cultivated lands would all be overgrown with weeds, and the forests would resume their sway,

and the houses would fall to the ground, and the wharves would rot, and the ships would decay, and the warehouses would go to ruin, and the wares would crumble to dust? When two or three hundred years had rolled around without a man on the globe, all machines would be at an end, all factories would have ceased their work, all gardens and farms would be gone to waste, all canals would have been turned into rivers or have perished utterly, and nothing would be left in the world but an absolute wilderness.

What, under such circumstances, would become of natural laws? They would be all that yet remained. Gravity, electricity, light, heat, magnetism—all those great natural laws which make summer and winter, and create the motions of the earth and the seasons, would remain. The substantial, material laws which are said to be collective God—these would remain; but man being taken away, what would be the result? All that makes time and the world of any value would perish. Nothing would remain but natural laws; and there would be no products from them.

And suppose, when the world had swung round and round, empty of its population, and had reverted again to the barbaric and savage conditions of nature—suppose that then mankind, suddenly, by a divine fiat, should be put back into the world again, and the forge should be kindled, and the plow should start, and the hammer should be heard, and villages and cities should be reared, and the power of agriculture should be spread throughout the earth: how quickly would the effects of nature be changed! Take away man's intelligence, and the globe goes back to nothing, and becomes a mere skeleton, or a bundle of unfruitful forces, and is a rude wilderness; shove back the intelligence of man, and what do natural laws do? Instantly they feel an inspiration. Somewhere or other they have a power under them by which they begin to produce orchards, gardens, houses, fleets, armies, libraries, all elements that are needful to clothe the earth, and make it beautiful. Natural law without man is a mere barbaric, fruitless force; but natural law with man is a power of civilization. For what is civilization but the fruitfulness of natural laws when they

have been touched and inoculated by the power of the human mind ? A globe with only natural laws, without men to govern everything, would be a globe as empty as the moon ; but a globe with natural laws that have intelligence teaching them is as fruitful as the Garden of Eden, and as beautiful.

The difference, then, is not in the change of the natural law, but simply in this fact : that natural law, when human intelligence is present, is magnificent in its fruitfulness ; while, when human intelligence is absent, it loses all power of fruitfulness, and becomes a void, vulgar, coarse, hard, aimless force. So, without intelligence in connection with them, natural laws are raw forces that do the coarse work. They are material. All productive forces of law that are known are those which have human intelligence joined to them ; and the inoculation of natural laws with mind-force is the indispensable condition of variety and fruitfulness.

Nature, cerebrated, is civilization. Mind is itself a congeries of natural laws ; and they are the highest form of natural laws. All natural laws stand in relations to each other of co-ordination ; or, if you please to say so, according to the modern view, they interchange, and a correlation of forces takes place.

Now, all physical forces receive their crown, or reach up and take on their highest functions, in man's brain system. So that we have not natural law *and* man, who stands apart from it, but natural law working, as I had almost said, *in vacuo* when men are absent, and natural law working with its most capital development when men are interposed. And as there is subordination outside of us ; as there is interference with laws, so that fire does not always burn, nor water always wet, nor stones always fall when let go ; as you can use one law to overrule or direct another ; so natural laws that are lifted up and incorporated in the human mind are superior to all others, and can be put in opposition to them, can ride them, can vary them, can turn them withersoever they will, and can make them work.

We see this in common things ; and Christ more than hints that, by an extraordinary increase of the force of those natural laws which are represented in the human mind, as-

cendancy is gained over the lower and outer physical laws in such a way that, by faith, and by prayer, and by rising into certain states, men may control things that are around them, and that thus the globe may be made subservient to the mind-force of the race, as the body is made subservient to the mind-force of the man.

This is a matter which is not well understood ; which is yet obscure ; which is far from being explored or mapped out ; but there was an irregular indication of this principle which appeared in the days of Christ and his apostles, and which was said by our Saviour to be a power of God operating through men, and acting on the elements, and controlling disease and death itself. Irregular indications of it also pervade the history of the race down to our time, when what are called abnormal developments, strange phenomena in the spiritual realm, are almost universal.

Now, all these developments, the phenomena which are the subjects of so much thought, and which excite so much curiosity, I do not attempt to explain. I do not undertake to speak of their character, of their limits, of their metes and bounds ; I only say that as the human mind is itself the highest type of natural law, as it has supremacy over other laws, and as the Saviour declared that by a certain elevation it would have wonderful power in directing material forces, and as we see instances of it from time to time, it is not too much to say that the time will come when man's brain will direct physical laws in the world at large as to-day it controls physical laws in the hand, in the foot, or in any part of the body.

I do not think that the race has come to the end yet. I do not think it has yet evolved its full power. I do not think we understand either the structure of the powers within, or their relations to the powers without.

Natural law, then, in order to be effectual, needs brains.

Now, we come back to the point where we started. Here is the doctrine that was declared by our Lord in a hundred forms, and in a most emphatic manner—namely, that God, the Brain of the universe, controls events on this globe by a providence of love and kindness, so that “all things work together for good to them that love him.” But Science

comes in and says, "It is not so. God has made the great machinery of natural laws, and wound them up, so that they will run to eternity, or as near to it as they want to. He is busy with other things, and the vast apparatus is working; and nothing can interfere with it; but if you obey the laws of nature you will get what they have for you." How much has a natural law for me? Is there a law of nature that I can set to work in my field, and have it raise potatoes? So far as that is concerned, I shall get no potatoes so long as I rely upon natural laws simply. It is not until I have inoculated my farm with myself that it brings me anything besides weeds and stones. Where do the products of my land come from? "From natural laws," you say. Yes, if you include me as one of those laws. My thinking power; my experience; my ability to employ the dews and the rains, summer and winter, ten thousand physical elements—if you include these as belonging to natural law, I will not dispute you. If you admit that I am supreme over these things, having power to understand them, and knowing how to harness them, and drive them into my fields, and make them plow, and plant, and hoe, and reap, and thresh, and grind, then I grant that you are right. If you understand that it is mind-power in the farmer that causes natural law to yield his harvests, I agree with you.

Have I not a power over natural law which enables me to make my providence myself? and is God weaker than I am? Cannot I make a house, if I have money? How many men I can control! I can control them by the action of my will acting on theirs. Up rise the stone walls and the brick walls; on goes the roof; and inside spring forth all the refinements which belong to modern dwellings. I created that house, with its equipments, it is said. I did not strike a blow; but with my knowledge I set to work fifty men; and they prepared the stones, the brick, the lumber, the glass, all the materials that are required. No man builds a house without starting a thousand laborers, first or last. And the architect, or master, controls them all. It is his brain that calls them into action. All the numerous handiworks and wonderful complications are carried on under the inspiration of his

touch. His thought, his will is the influence which brings multitudinous forces to work on material things. And so he builds a house, and supplies it with everything that is necessary to make it convenient and comfortable, simply by the exercise of his mind-power.

My father stood surrounded with thirteen children blossoming about him. Eleven of them grew to man's estate, and there was not one of them that was evil. They were all healthy; they were all intelligent; they were all active; not one of them has gone to the poor-house, or been hung; and had not he something to do with their successful development? Was it the tides that brought it about? Was it the eclipses? Was it summer and winter? Was it gravity? Was it the correlation of forces? Dominant among all the natural causes (and there were any number of them) which led to this result, was the thought of my father's and my mother's brain. They made use of natural laws in such a way that a virtuous family grew up around them.

But there were other instances in which large households dissolved and went to pieces. The want of righteousness in somebody's brain was the reason. Natural laws in the one case worked virtue; and natural laws in the other case worked vice. Natural laws in the one case brought arms of sweet flesh warm with love about the young, and we had, step by step, the complicated and wonderful development of the wisely-ordered household; and in the other case natural laws brought sickness here, and dissipation there, and scattering everywhere. What was it that produced those effects? Cerebration, thought, will.

All over the world such things are going on. And will our philosophers tell us that natural laws are fixed, and must go right along? There are natural laws that act throughout the world; and they act more or less under human control. A natural law is a horse, and man rides it and makes it stop or work at his will. He changes the face of the earth by knowing how to use natural laws. There is, in this world, nothing that is so usable, nothing that is so plastic, nothing that, being resisted, is so irresistible, but that being used is so docile and obedient, as a natural law.

You understand that I use this term “natural law” as a convenient conventional phrase, representing generally *natural* or physical *forces*, though properly the *mode of their action*.

I am myself a natural law—a complex natural law—the highest form of natural law. My head is better than my feet, though my feet are useful to me. My body is a part of the material globe, and is subject to various influences which act upon matter. But, after all, I live in my brain ; and that which gives power, continuity, comprehensive planning, and ultimate results, commanding the day and night, the seasons, the heavens and the earth, so that they bring forth abundantly, not alone material things, but social and spiritual things as well, causing the world to bud and blossom as the rose—that is my will. Comprehensively regarded, the control of these myriad elements for the accomplishment of my purposes is the work of my brain. And I stand, by reason of my brain, superior to the clod ; to stone and wood ; to the seasons ; to all things in the outward world ; and I make them bow down to me. So the sun is my messenger ; the moon is my witness ; and the stars work for me and for others. I can make the ocean serve me ; the rivers are my workingmen, unpaid and unbribed, who never strike for fewer hours ; and all things on the globe are my servants.

Under such circumstances, it does me good to hear men come out of the laboratory, and say, “There cannot be any providence.” “Why?” “Oh, because God never meddles with natural law.” “Well, then, he is not so meddlesome as I am.” “God has fixed his laws, and they go right along, and what they have for you you will get ; but do not expect any special blessings.”

If I, that am allied to the clod, and that am comparatively powerless, can understand natural laws, and change the face of the globe, and make a providence of virtue or a providence of vice, a providence of prosperity or a providence of adversity ; if it is in my power to use natural laws, who stand under them, and am more or less restrained by them through my ignorance, how much more can He who stands over the

whole machinery of the world, and looks down upon it, make it work for him and his purposes !

Men seem to think that God can do this, but that he does not. It is said that God does not work miracles for men. Who says that he does ? I do not. I say that the teaching of the New Testament is simply this : "Work out your own salvation ;" "For it is God that worketh in you." Ah ! when God wants to make a providence, he knows what natural laws to use. He does not think it necessary to do this, that, or the other thing *for* me ; but he touches *me*, and makes *me* feel, and makes *me* plan, and makes *me* industrious, so that I become skillful and efficient.

Even my mistakes are providences ; for, as an axe is made sharp by that which it loses on the grindstone, so men are made sharp by that which they lose through blunders that fit them for the next encounter.

When, therefore, God wants to work a providence, he does not think it necessary that he should whisper, and say, "Clouds, go down and rain on Beecher's farm"—not that at all ; he says to me, "Subsoil your land ;" and when I have done that, I shall have a cistern which will supply all the moisture that my crops need, without the aid of plumbers, thank God, and without any pipes.

So God inspires human intelligence in dealing with the natural globe. Everybody has supposed that to work out a providence it was necessary that the divine Spirit should take hold of outside physical laws, and bring them, by a divine impulse, to work for men. That may be true in part ; I do not deny it ; I think it is a doctrine that can be defended ; but this I say, as the result of observation and study : that the divine soul works upon the human soul, and is in sympathy with it ; and that the human soul, inspired, has power over natural law. Everyone who uses his body under the control of his will, or brain-power, shows that he has power over the natural laws which are around him ; and if God inspires him, and stimulates him, and pours the light of joy into him, does he not cause that man to make a providence ?

How do you teach your child to make a fortune ?

Well, you set an object before him. By your mind-power you wake up his curiosity; you excite his ambition; you quicken his love of property, his love of influence and his love of praise. You also point out lines of conduct, here and there, for his guidance. By reason of your stimulation he earns and accumulates wealth; and when he is old, he says, "My father was one of those wise men who determined not to leave me riches, or to earn them for me; and I thank God that I had a father who taught me to acquire property for myself. The course which he pursued with me was the true one; for in the long run nobody is fit to have property but the man who earns it." In such a case, the father is a providence for the child, and God is a providence for the father. God working through the cerebral economy of the father, and the father working through the cerebral economy of the child, and the child working on this natural result of natural forces.

Men say, "The teaching of the New Testament, that the hairs of our head are all numbered; that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's notice; that we are to have no anxious thought because God thinks for us; and that we are to seek first the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto us—this teaching is not philosophical;" but I say that it is philosophical! Let us look at the last of these declarations—namely, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The truth involved here is this: that the lower forms of organized brain control the lower forms of matter; and that as you carry the brain up by organization, it becomes more potential, and controls forms of matter that are higher. The man who has the most moral impulse, the highest inspiration, most easily appreciates influences and effects. What a man's true nature is depends upon the height to which you can develop him. It used to be understood that nature in a man was what he was when he was born; but it is now coming to be recognized that nature in a man is that which he can come to by legitimate, normal development. A man's nature is that which he has at the end, and not that which he has at the beginning.

And the more you develop a man toward God, toward spirituality, toward the supream forms of intellection and intelligence, the more easily does he control the senses and the lower elements with which he is called to deal. If men did "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," and make themselves more ample and more royal in their manhood, if they were more self-controlling, if they were more spiritual, if they were more intense in their faith, they would have clearer plans, and clearer foresight, and greater power. A generation of such men would work wonders in all departments of society; and the declaration, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you," would be verified in their experiences.

So, we are under a scheme of things in which, without weariness or slumber, without shadow or turning, the great Thought-power of the universe, the Fountain of Inspiration, the Center of knowledge, which guides all things, uses natural laws, that are embosomed and embodied in human intelligence, and by them creates friendships, inspires industry, produces wealth, develops instruments, enlarges civilization, and builds the soul higher and higher. He himself does it by the use of natural laws—not those lower and coarse ones which you think of when natural laws are mentioned, but that wondrous, manifold, complex system of natural laws which envelops the educated intelligence of a civilized and Christian man.

So, then, if science has no reason to object to this doctrine of a special providence, that is preëminently to be desired, and if it has been declared by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be absolutely true, why should we not take comfort in believing it?

"Ah, but," you will say to me, "if God does all things, does not his doing them tend to indolence on the part of men?" He does not do them in the sense of relieving men from all responsibility. Some persons seem to think that the doctrine of providence is a doctrine which represents God as bestowing blessings on men as one, seeing children below him, puts his hand in his pocket, and takes out sugar-plums, and

drops them down, that they may scramble for them ; but it is not such a providence that I mean : I mean a providence like that by which a loving mother educates her children. It is a providence which says to me, “ Work, *work* ; I am working in you, *WORK* ! ” It is a grand providence. It is the best that is used in the world.

A pilot, standing at the wheel, gives it one little hitch, and says to the bow, “ Turn yourself ” ; and thus the will of the pilot, acting through that wheel, makes the bow or stern move this way or that way, as the case may be. It is the man at the helm, directing physical forces by his mind-power, that produces the result.

God, in working by his providence, operates with discrimination in regard to the moral structure of man, through whom he works. This is the very idea of natural law working in accordance with principles of right and wrong.

When, therefore, men say in respect to any set of circumstances, that when they pray to God he will make things thus and so, and that they may fold their hands and wait, do you suppose Divine providence will do that ? I do not. I can conceive of emergencies in the history of nations when dramatic actions might be better than institutions, and more impressive to the imagination ; I can understand how the hand of God might open a path through the Red Sea and let his people pass, or how he might send plague after plague to desolate Egypt ; I can see how, as on a great back-ground, there might be these workings out of the Divine providence to impress men until institutions should, by legitimate and normal education, be established ; I can perceive that such things might be wise and proper ; but these things do not represent the particular method by which Divine providence works. As a general thing, it works through great natural laws, and you are one of them. It works on natural laws through you. It wakes you up, and sets you to work, and punishes you when you do wrong, and rewards you when you do right. Providence works on you and around you ; it works in you and outside of you. It co-ordinates influences, and brings them together in such ways that the world is at last coming to recognize that rectitude is synonymous with prosperity.

The great animal kingdom in the woods are hungry, and they roar and raven, and they think of nothing but to stop the aching of the belly ; and having done that, they creep back to their dens, and sleep, and wake again to eat, and eat and sleep. That is well enough for them, because right and wrong have no relations to them.

But in the great higher creation—in the human family—little by little there has been, through the experience of men, the great fact that right is the best policy. Truth, purity, self-denial, industry, frugality—these are the timbers that have been hewed out ; and what a foundation has been laid ! What a vast accumulation, at last, has been made by providence working through a congeries of natural laws ! It may not be wise, therefore, to say in respect to any particular thing, “ This proceeds directly from the will of God.”

A man's child dies, and he says, “ This is a mysterious providence.” Well, was it not a mysterious providence when the child lived ? It is said, “ When a man was going along the street one day, to his wedding, a brick fell off from a chimney, and struck him on the head ; and he was laid dead.” And the preacher will say, “ It was a strange and mysterious providence.” Well, there was another young man, on the same day, going through that same street, to his wedding ; and a brick did not fall and hit him ; was not that event just as much a providence as the other ? You think that examination points are the whole of literature, and that only here and there an event which startles you is providential ; whereas, ten thousand events, and combinations of them, are proceeding on precisely the same plan—namely, the working together of the soul and mind of God and the soul and mind of men. According to this plan, under the divine guidance, myriads of results are worked out which you do not notice ; but now and then one steps out more clearly and dramatically, and you call that a providence. It is a providence, and there is a providence all the time. Good and bad, light and shade, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, things present and things to come, all alike are God's. We are living under a cope where we are just as certainly divinely

thought of and cared for as children under the roof of a father are paternally thought of and cared for.

I do not know how much comfort that gives you, but it gives me a good deal. It is a great comfort to me, when I look up and around, to see that there is something besides air ; that there is something besides sun, moon and stars ; that there is something besides those great and wondrous forces which sway these orbs ; that they themselves are effects produced by an Intelligence that is beyond them.

There is a Brain somewhere—the heathen knew that ; and it is the peculiarity of Christianity to come in and say, “There is a Heart too.” And what we want to know is, that you and I, and all of us, are not moving like the moon, through the ways of blind fatality ; that we are not hung, like bags that catch flour, at the bottom of the mill while the machinery above crushes the grain relentlessly ; that as, in the household, the father and mother think, and forethink, and work, and bring out the products of happiness among the children, so God, in the larger sphere, works on us and in us to do his will, that we may rise in power, in knowledge, in virtue, in holiness, and be fitted at last to be transplanted. So soon as there is enough of a man to enable one, seeing it under a microscope, to swear that he has a personal identity, then, when his flesh has dropped away, he may be carried into another life ; but, take care ! of a great many of you, if your flesh were to be taken away, there would not be enough left to enable an angel, with a compound microscope, to see a particle !

What does it signify that a man is annihilated, if there is not enough of him to annihilate or destroy ? When a taper goes out, the tallow is all sucked up and burned ; it goes out because there is nothing there ; and your business in life is to develop something that is salvable—something more than foundation quality ; something more than matter ; something more than mere morals ; something that is spiritual, ineffable, divine ; so that when the body drops, by that great systematic arrangement of providence by which God has evolved you, and brought you to a higher and a larger inward manhood, you will be also brought to that higher

sphere, you shall come to the heavenly land, to the society of the blessed, and be with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the presence of God, who is represented to us by him.

It is this faith in a divine Being, in his providential care over us, and in the influences which he is exerting upon us to bring us home to dwell with him, that gives us courage in despondency, hope in despair, light in darkness, consolation in grief, firmness under resistance, and faith, no matter how hard the storm, no matter how black the night, and no matter how tempestuous the sea, to go down out of the ship and walk upon the waves. If you see Jesus coming to you, be not afraid ; for you shall not sink.

It is in the hope that your thoughts have gone toward this great overruling Mind-power, Soul-power, and Administrator of the universe and of divine providence, and that you may renew your faith and allegiance in that direction, that we shall now gather round the table where the broken bread represents to all Christ broken for us. He that suffers no more, bless you. He that wanders no more by the sea of Galilee, bring peace to you. He that forgave the outcast, the harlot, the thief, the rude and riotous man, forgive you. He that loved Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha, and John ; he that bore with Thomas, the doubter ; he that gave faith to those who had it not, let him draw near to you ; and do you draw near to him, and renew your love and fidelity to him, in the very affecting though very simple services of the Communion of the Lord's Supper.

Those who desire to unite with us in these services are affectionately invited to tarry after the blessing is pronounced. This invitation is purely and absolutely spiritual, and not ecclesiastical. I do not ask those who are members of sister churches—they are welcome, of course. To you who feel the need of Christ, and are willing to accept him as your Christ, and to yield obedience to him, I say, Come. I mean all who are conscious of their weakness and sin, and long for succor, and will take it at the hands of the Saviour. What, if they belong to the Catholic church ? Yes. If they belong to the Unitarian church ? Yes. If they belong to the Universalist church ? Yes. If they belong to the Swe-

denborgian church? Yes. The humanity that belongs to you is more than any name that you can put upon it. A man is more than any title that you can attach to him. And whatever name you bear, O soul, whelmed, imperiled in the midst of matter, there is a spirit of God that offers himself to you, and calls to you. Do you want him? Do you feel your need of him? Are you conscious of your relation to God? Then you have a right to these emblems. It is not a right that is conferred by churches or priests. I invite everybody whose soul needs, and who is willing to accept, succor through Christ, to partake of the Supper of the Lord Jesus.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.*

WE rejoice, our Father, that thou art made manifest to us by the world around us, and yet more through our own selves; that thou dost bear witness to us by thy spirit, speaking to our understanding and to our moral consciousness; and that thou art better known within than from without. We rejoice that thou art drawing many to a recognition of their allegiance to thee, and to a joyful willingness to obey thee, that they may develop in themselves that which shall bring them into the son-ship of God. We thank thee that there are one and another, continually, waking from a life of sin, arousing themselves from the dominion of their senses and bodily appetites, and from the perversion of their privileges, abandoning the ways of evil, and drawing near with hope, for strength and consolation, to an all-pardoning Saviour. We thank thee that so many are received by him, and are beginning to rejoice in his presence and service, and are more and more brought under the dominion of obedience through love. We thank thee that thou hast gathered so many here, and that thou art still gathering so many through the instrumentality of teaching and prayer. We thank thee that by the lives of thy servants thou art making the Gospel known to those who are out from under its influence. We thank thee that to the poor the Gospel is preached; that it is not without power; that we see so many who are being called from darkness to light; that there is so much of joy restored to houses which had become desolate, and so much of consolation to those who were broken in heart, and so much of release and liberty to those who were bond-slaves of sin. Blessed be thy name for all these tokens of thy presence, for the power which thou didst give to thy truth, and for the inspiration of labor which thou didst breathe into the hearts of thy true servants.

We thank thee that thou hast brought into our own number so many, and that thy love to them brings summer into this church, and that thy heart broods here, and that peace and joy in the Holy Ghost abound in our midst. We pray, O Lord, that this may be a haven of rest, undisturbed by storms without. Here may we come, week by week, to find thee, and to find in thee strength, and courage, and inspiration, and goodness, and usefulness.

Bless those who are this morning united with us. We pray that the work which has begun in them may not stop with their life here. May they be fruitful branches of this vine; and may they in all things grow up into Christ, who is the Head.

And we pray that thou wilt spread abroad thy work from the hearts of thy servants still more widely. Inspire them, we beseech thee, with a righteous enterprise. Give them patience, self-denial, and disinterestedness; and may they find, in every sphere, something to do in the name of Jesus.

We pray that thou wilt deepen in the hearts of those who have begun to live Christian lives an appreciation of the truth as it is in Christ. Wilt thou be pleased to relieve those who are perplexed in

* Immediately following the reception of members into the church.

their experience; to strengthen those who are weak; to give courage to those who are timid; to subdue unruly passions where they exist; to build up fidelity in those who are unfaithful; to give light to those who are in doubt; and to give guidance to those who know not thy way. We pray that thou wilt make the path of life plain to those who are stumbling in the dark.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, our God, that thou wilt bless all instrumentalities which thy servants have been led to employ in thy cause. Purify their labors. And especially, when thou art spreading abroad through this land a more eager desire for the reformation of morals, we pray that thou wilt encourage whatever is wise, and restrain whatever is dangerous. Help thy servants so to work in thy cause that thy name shall be glorified, that thy will shall be established, and that the evils which afflict and desolate thy people shall be limited or put away.

O God, we pray that thou wouldst inspire the hearts of this great people to temperance, to fidelity, to obedience, to uprightness in all things, to truth, to patriotism, and to unity therein.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt breathe upon this nation an earnest purpose to do good to those who are around it. May its hand be saved from wantonness toward the weak. May its greediness and ambition be suppressed. We pray that it may abide in such purity, and peace, and strength, that other nations, beholding us in Christian liberty, may be led in the same way, and to the same blessed consummation.

We pray for the world. How long wilt thou bear with it? When wilt thou come, O thou blessed Saviour, to reign on the earth, to fulfill thy decrees, and to bring to pass those happy years which have been predicted? Grant that hindrances may be taken out of the way, that the force of things which are for Christ may be augmented, and that with diminishing evil and increasing righteousness the work may make haste toward completion, when that time shall come in which the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Grant, O blessed King, sovereign in love and in power, that all nations may know thee, and submit to thy sway, that the glory of the latter day may dawn, and that thy promises may be fulfilled to our heart's joy, and to the honor of thy name.

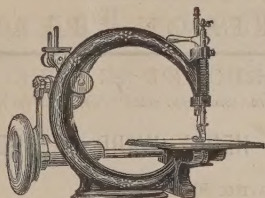
And the praise shall be given to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, evermore. *Amen.*

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